

Remarks in Sioux Falls, South Dakota

November 4, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, I didn't expect to see so many of you here this late at night. Senator and Mrs. Daschle; Senator-to-be and Mrs. Johnson; Congressman-to-be and Mrs. Weiland. And I want us to give a real good hand here to Rick Weiland and his fine wife. They've done a great job out there campaigning, give them a hand. [Applause] Pam Nelson, thank you for your candidacy. Give Pam Nelson a hand. Stand up, Pam. She needs your help tomorrow. [Applause] I want to thank CeCe Peniston for singing so beautifully; the Bill Gibson Orchestra. Thank you, South Dakota State University Marching Band. You were fabulous.

Now, you know, if the rest of us can maintain that level of energy till the polls close tomorrow night, we're going to be just fine, and this is great. We're going to be fine. Thank you.

And I want to thank my long-time friend who was with me 4 years ago on this night under similar circumstances. He's going to bring us good luck again, Jerry Jeff Walker and his band. Thank you for being here. God bless you, friend.

You know, folks, I appreciate what Tom Daschle said in thanking us for our lavish attention to South Dakota and all that. It's not complicated. I like it here. I like coming here. I enjoy being here. I feel at home here. I feel this is a place where people still know their neighbors and where they care about what happens to their neighbors and where they understand, in the best sense, as Hillary often says, it does take a village for us to raise our children and build our future.

This is the last election of the 20th century for President, the first election of the 21st century, an election occurring against a background of almost breathtaking, unimaginable changes in technology and science, in the way we are simply organized to work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world. The young people here in this audience today, in a few years many will be doing jobs that have not been invented yet. Many will be doing jobs that have not been imagined yet.

One little piece of evidence about how much the world is changing: When I became President there were 3 million Americans who were living and working in their homes, making a living. That was 4 years ago. Today, there are 12 million Americans doing that because of technology, and 4 years from now there will be 30 million Americans doing that.

We just signed a contract, the United States did, with IBM to develop a supercomputer that will do more calculations in one second than you can do at home tonight on your hand-held calculator in 30,000 years. That is an example of what is happening.

I say that to make this point: This is an election of enormous consequence, not because of Tim Johnson or Bill Clinton but because of the sweeping changes going on in our country. And the great question is, how shall we respond to those changes?

There's been a lot of back and forth in this campaign that I think is, unfortunately, a byproduct of much of modern politics, a lot of negative stuff. My experience has been that most people in public life in both parties are good, honest, hard-working people who give their lives to their country and love their country. In this case we just have different views. And you should be happy about that because in an election of great consequence there ought to be a clear choice and you ought to have some way of measuring whether the choice you're making is right. And I would argue to the people of South Dakota—I know that there are more registered Republicans than Democrats here; I know there are a lot of registered independents here. This vote tomorrow should be the first vote of the 21st century. It ought to be a vote about people and progress and hopes and dreams. Party is not nearly as important tomorrow as reaching out for our dreams and our deepest hopes for our children, and that is what I am asking.

Now, you know, maybe some of you have noticed this, but I am now speaking at the last rally of the last campaign I will ever run. And I'm honored to share it with you. It's hard for me to believe that this January it will be 23 years ago when, as a young 27-year-old man, I asked the people of my rural hill country congressional district in Arkansas

to send me to Congress. They said no, by the way. [Laughter]

And everybody thought I was washed up. Then I got to be my State's attorney general and Governor, and then in the Reagan landslide of 1980 they said no again. [Laughter] By the time I was 34 years old, I had already been defeated twice. I was in Ripley's already. I was the youngest ex-Governor in the history of America. [Laughter] But the people of my home State were good to me. We learned a lot together, and we did a lot together. And 4 years ago you gave me the chance to be President.

The American people 4 years ago took us on faith when I said that I hated what had happened in politics in Washington; it was too much hot air, too many insults, not enough issues, not enough results, not enough people reaching across the partisan divide and working together in a new and different time to try and build a new politics for America. I said that if you elected me, I would follow a vigorous and disciplined approach: more opportunity for everybody, more responsibility from everybody, and an American community in which everyone who works hard and is responsible has a place at the table and a role to play. We have done that for 4 years, and you don't have to guess anymore.

Our friends on the other side, they honestly believe that we're better off when we're on our own. I think we're better off when we work together to give each other not a guarantee but a chance to make the most of our own lives and our families and our future. And you don't have to guess anymore.

This economy is stronger than it was 4 years ago. The deficit has gone down by 63 percent and there are 10.7 million more jobs and the lowest rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years. Something that's always been important to hard working families in this part of our country is that everybody who works hard ought to have a fair share. We've had the biggest decline in inequality of incomes among working people in 27 years, the biggest drop in child poverty in 30 years, the lowest rate of poverty among seniors in America ever recorded since we've been keeping statistics. We are moving in the right direction to the 21st century. We are.

And in our country as a whole the crime rate has gone down to a 10-year low. The welfare rolls have dropped by nearly 2 million. Child support collections, by the way, are up by about 50 percent. And more children are getting what they are entitled to. Our economy is in better shape than it was 4 years ago, but so is our environment. We've taken millions of tons of pollutants out of the atmosphere, raised the standards for safe drinking water and the purity of food. And I might add, we've done that with the support of the agricultural community. We've cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than our opponents did in 12.

So we're moving in the right direction. And you have this clear choice. They say all these terrible things they say about all of us, you know, but it obscures the fact that we're moving in the right direction, that we have now 4 years of evidence that "you're on your own" is not nearly as good as we're working together to build a bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across. And that's what this is about.

Now, there is another very important piece of evidence here, and that is when our friends in the other party were in power and were given the power to enact their "Contract With America"—by the way, how many times has Congressman Johnson's opponent mentioned that contract in this election? But anyway, they did it, and it wasn't just the House under Newt Gingrich. It was the Senate under Senator Dole. They did it together. And they passed their version of what they thought America's future ought to be. They did it all by themselves. They told us they didn't want our help, they didn't want our votes, and they weren't interested in our input. They wanted to do it, and they wanted to show America what they wanted to do.

And we saw. We saw. They passed a budget which cut 3 times as much from Medicare as was necessary to save the Trust Fund and divided the program so that the oldest, the poorest, and the most ill of our seniors ran the risk of being put in a second-class program at a time when it wasn't necessary and at a time when we know it's wrong. We've got the lowest poverty rate we ever had among seniors. And in America, if you live to be 65, you have the highest life expectancy

of any group of seniors in the world. That's a high-class problem. Why would they mess that up? That's what they tried to do.

They also took the Medicaid program, which has for 30 years provided a guarantee of health care to poor women and infant children, to middle class families with family members with disabilities so they could take care of their family members and still work and maintain their middle class lifestyle, to a lot of our seniors in nursing homes and standards for those nursing homes and they got rid of all that. And they cut education funding from Head Start to college loans for the first time in modern history, abolished the Department of Education, abolished the program to put 100,000 police on our street, which has played a critical role in bringing the crime rate down, and paralyzed environmental enforcement and cut it back by 25 to 30 percent. That's what they did. They also—oh, by the way—raised taxes on 9 million of our hardest pressed working families and gave companies the authority to raid their workers' pension funds. We went through that in the 1980's. In 1994, Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson and I passed a worker protection pension act to protect the pensions of 40 million retired and still working people, and they wanted to turn around and undo that. That's what they did.

Now, along toward the end of this last Congress they adopted our program. They said, "Oh, we've got to go face the voters. We'll give the President what he wants." And they hope you have this case of collective amnesia. *[Laughter]* The Vice President told a story today in Cleveland when we were together—I had forgotten this story; we used to tell it at home all the time—but it captures what they're trying to get you to think about their budget.

It's a story about a politician who's out in the country, and he sees a farmer. He's running for office, and the farmer is sitting up on his porch rocking, and he says, "I'm going to go talk to this farmer," but there's a big old dog in the yard that's ferocious looking. So he says, "Sir, I'd like to come visit with you, but does your dog bite?" He said, "No." So he hikes over the fence, goes over on the porch, shakes hands with the farmer and tells him he's running for the legislature and

would like to have his vote. And the dog runs up and bites him right in the rear. *[Laughter]* And he runs back and jumps in his car and rolls the window down and said, "I thought you said your dog didn't bite." He said, "Son, that ain't my dog." *[Laughter]*

And let me tell you something, folks, that budget that I vetoed, it is their dog, and it was a mangy old dog, and that's why I vetoed that dog. And everybody—and I'll tell you, if you reward them, everybody—oh, I can see it all now in the columns the next day—well, that budget wasn't so unpopular after all. You have to decide.

They said, "Well, the Democrats—Tom Daschle, Tim Johnson, people like that—they love the Government so much they'll never let us shut it down, and we'll just make the President cave. We'll put them all on their knees. If they don't take our budget and let us shove it to the American people, we'll just shut the Government down, and we'll show them who's boss."

And they did it, and we didn't cave. And they did it again, and we didn't cave. And what I finally told them was, I said, "Look, I hate to see the American people inconvenienced for 30 or 40 days, but that is nothing to seeing the American people hurt, divided, and set back for 30 or 40 years. Shut her down. We are not going to cave." Thank you, Tim Johnson, for staying there. Thank you.

Now, let me give you an idea of what the practical impact of that was on you. I was in Denver the other night and we had a nice little indoor rally like this—I think you got more folks here tonight. But they were really great, though. We had a great rally, and after the rally I did what I always do: I started at one end, went to the other end, just shook hands with everybody I could reach. And while I was moving in a space about like this, I met the following people: I met a young woman who started crying who thanked me for the work we were doing in trying to combat domestic violence and violence against women. She was obviously a victim. That was in the crime bill that they opposed. So if they had had their way, it wouldn't be law.

Then I met a young woman in a police uniform from a smaller community in Colorado thanking me for the five new police officers that her community had, and she was

going to feel safer on the street and the kids were going to be safer in her community. That was in the crime bill, and that was in the budget that they tried to do away with. All those police officers, they wouldn't have been there.

Then I met a young man who had dropped out of college and went back when we changed the college loan program so you could borrow a lot of money and then pay it back as a percentage of your income so young people would never be bankrupted by borrowing the money to go to college. They did away with that, too. They tried to kill it, and they did away with that.

Then I met a man who told me that he and his wife had just adopted a 2-month-old baby, and his wife was able to go home and make that child more comfortable in their new circumstances without losing her job because of the family and medical leave law. And they led the fight against that. This happens to me all the time.

Then I met a young woman who was going to college because she'd worked in AmeriCorps, the national service program, serving her community, and earned the money to go to college. Seventy thousand young people have done that. They are solving problems and helping people all across America, and they did away with that in the budget.

Now, those are just people that I just ran into in a line just like this in South Dakota. This has huge consequences for America. Now, I know that in Congressman Johnson's race there's a lot of talk about clout. And that's an interesting concept, clout. [Laughter] It looks to me like you'd have a lot of clout if Tom Daschle were the majority leader of the Senate. You would have a lot of clout because everybody in the entire United States Congress, in both parties, who knows him respects Tim Johnson as one of the most hard-working, effective, intelligent, persistent Members of Congress in the entire country.

And you'd have a lot of clout because the President likes Congressman Johnson and listens to him. And when he says, "Mr. President, you're wrong; you shouldn't do this. This, this is what's in the best interest of the

people of South Dakota," I would be highly likely to listen to Tim Johnson if he said this.

So it makes a difference. You know, the title is not enough. There's a difference. You have to draw these distinctions. It reminds me of my other favorite dog story. [Laughter] You know about—this guy is going down the highway, and he sees this sign that says, "George Jones, Veterinarian/Taxidermist. Either way you get your dog back." [Laughter]

It makes a difference. Tim Johnson will have good clout. He'll be very, very good, and he won't be using a committee chairmanship to saddle the American people or the people of South Dakota with the kind of budget that I had to veto that would have divided this country and set us back. He'll be building a bridge to the future.

So you ought to go to the polls tomorrow happy and upbeat and feeling good about your country. You ought to go to the polls tomorrow with absolutely no doubt in your mind that the best days of America lie ahead. But you should be heavily aware of the responsibility you and all Americans bear to seize this opportunity to say, if we're going to meet the challenges we face, if we're going to seize the opportunities we have, we have to do this together. There are some things we must do together. I talked about that supercomputer. The richest person in this audience tonight cannot afford to build that.

Every American who won a Nobel Prize this year in physics and chemistry started with a public research grant. The Internet, which is going to be the salvation of so many people in rural areas, allowing them access to things they would never have otherwise, started as a Government research project. It's now in the private sector where it belongs, but I just announced another investment of \$100 million to modernize and expand it because when we all get on we don't want it to break down. We want it to take us out to the rest of the world.

Now, we have to do some things together. So your vote is going to decide whether we go on and balance this budget, have a targeted tax cut for education, childrearing, health care, and home buying that we can afford in a balanced budget, protect Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment; or whether we go back and replay what

happened before with their big, risky tax scheme that still raises taxes on the hardest pressed working people, will require bigger cuts in those things than the ones I vetoed, will blow a hole in the deficit, and violates every fiscal principle that I know that the people of South Dakota, Republican, Democrat, or independent, all believe in. You have to decide. Let's go on and balance the budget and build that bridge to the 21st century. You will have to decide. You have to decide.

You have to decide whether we're going to finish the work of the crime bill and put a whole 100,000 police on the street; whether we're going to continue to support the safe and drug-free schools program which we have doubled so that more people will be out there telling these young people drugs are wrong, illegal, they can kill you. This is not the time to turn back on that problem. There's still too many kids out there raising themselves. They need a strong hand and guidance, and I want to give it to them. We dare not cut back on that program and walk away from it. You have to decide.

I say let's keep bringing the crime rate down. In 4 more years we might actually feel safe in this country again if we can do it. You have to decide.

You have to decide whether you really believe, not just something to cheer about on the eve of an election but whether deep inside you believe that America will never be what it ought to be until we give all of our children and all of our adults now access to world-class educational opportunities with high standards, accountability, technology, and all the benefits that the best schools have. You have to decide.

Let me just give you an example. I want to do three things. Number one, you know 40 percent of the 8-year-olds in this country still can't read a book on their own. A lot of them come from places where their first language is not English. That will be cold comfort to them when they can't learn later on because they didn't learn to read when they were young. We have a plan to mobilize a million volunteers. We have 100,000 more work-study slots that we'll make available to college students if they'll teach 8-year-olds to read. I want to go into the schools and work with the parents so that by the year

2000 every 8-year-old in this country can pick up a book and say, "I can read this all by myself." Will you help me do that? Will you help us do that? [Applause]

The second thing I want to do—we had an event about this in South Dakota not very long ago. I think the Vice President was here. We are working hard to connect every classroom and every library in every school in America to the information superhighway by the year 2000. And here's what it means. It means that children in every American tribe in America, children in the poorest rural school districts, children in the most remote districts in Alaska, children in the biggest—poor inner-city school districts in our biggest cities; children in urban, suburban, and rural districts; rich, poor, middle class—for the first time in the history of America, because of these connections we can make available the same learning from all over the world at the same level of quality in the same time to all of our children. It will revolutionize education. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

And finally, when you look at these college students, let me say that we must—we must—open the doors of college to all Americans. And we can do this, number one, by making 2 years of college as universal as a high school diploma is today. In 4 years we can do it by simply saying you can deduct from your tax bill, dollar for dollar, the cost of the typical community college tuition. All you have to do is go and make your grades and do your business.

Number two, I want to make it possible for more people to save in an individual retirement account, but withdraw from it tax-free if the money is used for education or home buying or health care.

And finally, something that would help virtually every person in that band up there. I think the people ought to be able to deduct up to \$10,000 per year for the cost of tuition at any college or university in any place in the United States. Now, will you help us do that? [Applause]

But again, I say, all these issues, all these divisions, they're not a matter of party. Every time we go through a period of big change, we are given an opportunity not only to increase our prosperity, not only to make our

lives more interesting but to build stronger families and stronger communities and to live closer to our values. That is what this election is about.

This is the last speech of my last campaign. If you came up to me and said, "What have you learned in 23 years that never changes?" I would say, when people look into their hearts and they ask, "What is the right thing for my children and for my family and for America's future," when they set aside their prejudices and embrace people of different racial and religious and ethnic groups who share their values of work and family and belief in the Constitution, when they roll up their sleeves and work together, America always wins.

This is the greatest country in human history because we have created a system in which you are the boss. Tomorrow you will be the boss, and you will go in there, and you will be asked, will we renew President Clinton's contract? You will be asked—you're going to be asked, should we hire Tim Johnson to be our Senator? Should we hire Rick Weiland to be our Congressman? Should we hire Pam Nelson to be our corporation commissioner? You're going to be asked these questions. But the real question is, are we going to do it together? That's what I've learned. I have learned that when we are divided, when we look down on each other, when we look for what these politicians call wedge issues to divide each other, to win a campaign because we get people in a lather so there's more heat than light in our debates and discussions, we always get hurt.

But when we join hands and run our country the way you try to run your families, your churches, your farms, your factories, your businesses, your communities, your charities, when we do that, we always win. There is no person living in this country today who knows that better than I do. There is no person living in this country today who has been given more gifts, who feels more humble on this night than I do. Fifty years ago, when I was born in a summer storm to a widowed mother in a little town in Arkansas, it was unthinkable that I might have ever become President. I'd like for you to believe I did it because I always worked 60 or 70 hours a week, I had an understanding and support-

ive and wonderful family, and I just did it. But it isn't true. I did it because at every step along the way for 23 years and long before, there was a Sunday school teacher, a teacher in school, a doctor, the guy running the Red Roof in my hometown who always stopped and talked to me and tried to give me encouragement when I was despondent, over and over and over. We just need to run our country the way we want to run our lives. That is what I have learned in 23 years, and that is what I ask you to vote for tomorrow as we build our bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you, God bless you, and good night. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 p.m. in the Sioux Falls Arena and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Linda Daschle, wife of Senator Tom Daschle; Tim Johnson, South Dakota senatorial candidate, and his wife, Barb; Pam Nelson, candidate for public utilities commission; singer CeCe Peniston; and musician Jerry Jeff Walker.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Iraq

November 4, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraqi compliance with the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council. This report covers the period from September 5 to the present.

Saddam Hussein's attack on Irbil in late August and his continuing efforts to manipulate local rivalries in northern Iraq to his advantage, provide new evidence that he remains a threat to his own people, to his neighbors, and to the peace of the region. As I detailed in my last report, the United States responded to Saddam's military action in the north by expanding the Southern no-fly zone from 32 degrees to 33 degrees north latitude. The U.S. response included strikes against surface-to-air missile sites, command and control centers, and air defense control facilities south of the 33rd parallel in order